The Art of Misdirection

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The Art of Misdirection

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Summary

In hindsight, Hannibal understands why Will Graham blames him for his life, his entire practice, being uprooted unceremoniously.

After all, Hannibal came into his life and disrupted every aspect of it, his own empathy and neuroses blending and blurring with Will's until they were more like one person than separate entities.

Notes

Day 15 of AU_Gust Prompts is: Role Reversal

Doctor!Will & FBI Agent!Hannibal with some mistaken Ripper identity!

See the end of the work for more notes

In hindsight, Hannibal understands *why* Will Graham blames him for his life, his entire practice, being uprooted unceremoniously. After all, Hannibal came into his life and disrupted every aspect of it, his own empathy and neuroses blending and blurring with Will's until they were more like one person than separate entities.

Things had taken a turn after their first successful case together; bringing down Garrett Jacob Hobbs had only solidified for them that perhaps two predators *could* work together towards a common goal without ripping out each other's throats. Hannibal's work with the FBI was messy at best, downright dangerous to his and Will's shared *extracurriculars* at worst. And, so it seems, *worst* had come for Will.

The smallest, most unlikely of things finally what ended Will's decades long killing spree. He'd made one fatal mistake in calling the Hobbs residence before he and Hannibal had arrived on the scene to warn the man, his daughter - the catalyst for his murders - the one to answer the phone rather than her father.

Abigail had pointed a finger at Will when she'd awoken, and that seed of doubt had been enough to have Jack Crawford crawling all over Will's practice; his office raided nearly immediately after the damning accusation, no time for Hannibal to even try and warn Will. Hannibal had been reckless in the early, tentative beginnings of their partnership. When he and Will had been thrust together by Jack to work on criminal profiles and had somehow managed to profile one another instead, coming to all the right conclusions about what exactly the other got up to in the privacy of their own home.

Hannibal had been alone for longer than he could remember, and that aloneness had bred a certain amount of distrust in others, perhaps what some would consider paranoia. He'd stashed evidence in Will's office during several of their profiling sessions, the psychiatrist completely unaware his inner sanctum had been infiltrated.

It had only been meant as a fail-safe, a last resort if Doctor Graham turned on him in the end. Unfortunately, with Abigail's scathing rebuke and Jack's own paranoia and desperate desire to see the Chesapeake Ripper brought low, Will had been forced to flee. Not that Will had ever been the Ripper, that was Hannibal's own hand, Will a creature wholly unique and beautiful in his single-minded ferocity.

It has been weeks since Hannibal last truly saw Will, though he's felt his presence in a number of ways. They are seemingly locked in a heated battle of wits and survival, each of them baiting the other into increasingly dangerous scenarios though Hannibal is certain Will is happy to know he's alive and well after Will's latest attempt, one which very nearly *did* bring Hannibal down.

He decides it's time for a ceasefire. He's on *vacation,* but his requirements with Jack are quickly approaching and the end of his and Will's little game of cat and mouse must come soon. Hannibal is ready to leave with Will, has thought often over the last weeks about the offer Will had made once, for them to simply disappear together. Easy as anything.

Hannibal had scoffed at the idea when it was first presented, but he can no longer deny his feelings for Will have veered into the *extremely inconvenient.* His regard is bordering upon obsession, he knows, but he never expected to find a kindred spirit in all his life, accustomed to and comfortable in his loneliness until Will had stepped into his life and shown him how things could be with a *partner.*

He taps his fingers against the bartop of the little dive he's found himself in tonight, a hole in the wall of a hole in the wall in Cuba. When the bartender makes his way over to him, Hannibal orders two whiskeys in passable Spanish; his linguistic talents lie elsewhere, and while he's certain he'd have no trouble relying on English, Hannibal is up to the challenge of testing his sixth language. He accepts one of the tumblers, twisting it idly on the sticky strip of bar before him, and pushes the second tumbler to the space in front of the empty seat beside him.

It's good fortune that the expected occupant claims the seat just as Hannibal is lifting his own glass to his mouth; all the better to hide the twitch of his lips as they threaten to pull into a smirk.

"You've no right coming here," Will mutters icily, but Hannibal can see in his peripheral vision that he accepts the proffered whiskey all the same.

"You can relax, dear Will. I'm not here in any official capacity," Hannibal assures him. He doesn't turn his attention to the man beside him, instead steadies his gaze forward to seek him in the aged mirror that comprises the backdrop of the bar. He's caught in Will's stormy gaze immediately, feeling almost foolish to have assumed that the gesture would be sly.

"I gathered that by the lack of handcuffs," Will grunts back, swallowing down half of the amber liquid in his glass. "Still doesn't explain what the *fuck* you think you're doing here."

The words *I missed you* dance dangerously close to the tip of Hannibal's tongue, and he takes a sip of his own drink to swallow them back. "This can't go on, Will. We'll destroy each other or ourselves before we find peace if we don't find a way to let this go."

"We don't have to find a way to do *shit,"* Will spits, swiveling on his stool to fix Hannibal with an icy stare. *"You're* the one that fucked up, Hannibal. Fucked *me.* And why? Because, because you were *curious?* Wanted to see what I'd *do?"*

"You've shown me very clearly what you would do, Will," Hannibal replies softly, his eyes falling to the angry red scars that climb his wrists, showcased only because the dreadfully humid heat of the night had coaxed him to roll up his sleeves.

"A job better left to myself, perhaps," Will mutters bitterly. "Clearly that's the only way to get something done, without someone having pesky second thoughts, or someone *intervening* in the final hour."

Hannibal turns as well, then, shifting his body and gaze toward Will directly. "You would finally seek to kill me yourself?"

He can see the question catches the attention of the bartender, the portly man tossing a confused glance in their direction from down the bar as he no doubt attempts to ensure he's translated the foreign speech correctly. Will's reaction is entirely the opposite; he squares his shoulders, lifts his chin proudly, meets Hannibal's gaze with pupils blown wide with desire and confirms, "Yes."

Hannibal gives a nod, drains the rest of his whiskey. "Well, then. Shall we adjourn somewhere a bit more private? Your home, perhaps." Pleasant anticipation twists warmly in his gut, co-mingling with the liquor to send a heady buzz through Hannibal when Will gives a sharp nod. "Lead the way," Hannibal urges, to which Will gives an unamused huff.

"As though you need me to. You know perfectly well where I'm staying, Hannibal. You've been watching me for a week."

"And yet you didn't run."

Will doesn't bother responding to that, merely finishes his last swallow of whiskey and slips from his barstool in stern silence. Hannibal follows, something like satisfaction rippling through him when Will takes the extra effort to hold the door for him.

He can't say that he's happy to see Hannibal here, but he also can't say that he's not happy to see him alive.

It will be so much more satisfying to quench his thirst for vengeance with his own two hands.

He's glad, at least, that the profiler doesn't feel the need to fill the silence between them as they stroll through the streets of Havana almost casually, as though one or both of them isn't marching toward their own demise. Will's heard every iteration possible of Hannibal's explanation for his actions, and he's sick of listening to them. All he wants to do is *hurt him,* break him down the way he broke down Will's entire life with all the forethought of someone tying their unlaced shoe.

That's what stung the most, Will thinks; the fact that planting evidence in his office was such a second nature, knee-jerk reaction to Hannibal that he didn't even stop to think about what had been unfolding between them. Didn't consider that maybe Will was falling for *him* just as readily as he was falling into the trap he'd laid.

Because for everything else in this world that Hannibal had to compulsively dissect to the bone, he never once let his mind unfold the meaning behind every impassioned conversation, every intimate dinner and desperate, needy fuck. Never once tried.

"When I saw you, that first time, in the marketplace, I thought for sure the FBI was coming for me," Will begins as they enter his villa and kick off their shoes. "Extradition laws be damned. A man like Jack Crawford would certainly find a workaround to that, if it meant getting *me."*

Hannibal follows him to the study and moves immediately to the hutch that contains the wet bar. Will's not surprised he knows his way around this space already; he's broken in at least twice in the last week to snoop around while Will was out. Will watches him pour them each a second tumbler of whiskey and accepts it silently, leaning against the mantle of the fireplace while Hannibal steps across the room to inspect the Steinway tucked into the corner.

"Jack would need to be very clever indeed to extricate you from this country to legally charge you in the States."

Will gives a snort at that, eyes trained on the amber liquid in his glass. "Fuck cleverness, I was waiting to be knocked out one night and wake up on American soil." Will shrugs, his eyes falling to Hannibal's own untouched tumbler and away just as quickly. "When *that* didn't happen, and no one came to break down my door, I kept waiting for your knife. But it never came. Why?"

"I don't want you dead, Will."

"Just in jail," Will shoots back bitterly.

"I don't want that either," Hannibal insists. "I never intended -"

"I don't want to hear another word about your intentions for me in Baltimore. Let's talk about your intentions *now.* We can start with what you put in the whiskey. Must not be poison, if you don't want me dead, right? So what happens if I drink it, Hannibal? Do I go to sleep and wake up in federal custody?"

Hannibal's eyes sharpen upon him, a small smile twisting his lips, and Will is equal parts perplexed and annoyed that the expression on Hannibal's face looks like *pride.* They hold each other's gaze steadily, mirroring each other perfectly as they both set aside their untouched drinks.

"Not in federal custody, no. I imagine Jack Crawford would faint to see you in the state I would prefer you; whorish and begging."

Will growls at the implication, throwing his glass to the floor so it shatters satisfyingly, the sound like a gunshot in the silence stretching between them. He has a scalpel in his hand and at Hannibal's throat before the profiler has even had a chance to blink at the mess Will is making.

"What's in the fucking whiskey, Hannibal?" Will's voice is more animal snarl than human, even to his own ears. He *hates* how much he craves Hannibal, even now, how his body is betraying him already simply from this level of touch.

It seems he isn't alone in his interest, he can feel Hannibal growing hard against his thigh and it only makes him push the blade more firmly against the long column of Hannibal's neck.

"Simply a mild sedative. I know you've been having trouble sleeping so when I first *came by* I dosed your entire liquor cabinet."

“You’ve been drugging me to sleep. How many times have you been in my house, Lecter?”

“Oh we’re back to Lecter now, are we?” Hannibal quips, and it only makes Will want to hurt him more, makes him want to wipe the smug look from his face.

“You’d do well to answer me seeing as I’m the one with a sharp weapon at your goddamn throat.” Will manages through clenched tight teeth.

“Four times. Three while you were out and once to check on you while you slept.”

Will blinks at that, surprised though he doesn’t know why. Of course Hannibal watches him sleep. “You creep. You watched me *sleep?”*

Hannibal presses himself into Will’s blade and the smell of iron fills the air, sharp and mouthwatering. Will hasn’t managed to kill anyone in *weeks,* and he knows it says something about him that the smell of Hannibal’s blood only causes him to harden further.

“You’re getting off on this you fucking psycho,” Will tries to distract, to call away from his own cock where it is visible within the confines of his pants.

“It would seem, dear Will, that so are you.”

Will gnashes his teeth in response, flashing them at Hannibal in warning.

“I should kill you and be done with this game. It’s tiring and I’m over it, Hannibal.”

“It needn’t be. Neither of us has to be alone anymore, Will. We could simply put this all behind us, leave together, tonight. As we’d planned.”

“Almost polite.” Will murmurs, remembering a conversation similar to this one so many weeks ago, before Hobbs. Before he’d lost his life in Baltimore, a life he’d clawed together for himself from nothing. He supposes it’s fitting that to nothing he shall return.

He wishes he could deny everything Hannibal is saying, could go back to the quiet, simple life he had before the agent or the FBI ever came into his life. But the memories of that life are still recent enough in his brain, echoing through the halls of his mind, and they feel *hollow.* He aches in his chest at the thought of Hannibal dead or gone, knows he can’t truly ever be rid of the other man. He’s grown into his marrow, like a tumor, and no amount of pulling him out will ever separate him from the root.

“Do you love me, Hannibal? Is that what you think this is between us? Why you’ve followed me from Baltimore and into whatever *this* is?” He pulls away enough to gesture vaguely and scoffs when Hannibal merely looks at him, eyes full of mirth and the thrill of adrenaline coursing through him.

He finally speaks, lips parting and voice soft as a sea breeze. “I *see you,* Will. More than, perhaps, you even see yourself. And I think that makes you angry because you don’t like the feelings it brings with it, the codependency it implies. We both are solitary creatures by habit and design, but not by nature; we crave the intimacy of togetherness. Each of us only able to be truly at our most honest selves when with one another.”

Will hums in response, considering. It isn't far off the mark, but if Hannibal thinks he's winning himself any favors by reminding Will how much he *craves him,* he has another thing coming. "If you want so badly to be with me, to *see me,* let me show you exactly what you have to look forward to, Hannibal. Let me show you the form my love takes."

"Gladly," Hannibal rejoins, his purr morphing into an indulgent moan as Will drags the blade in his grasp across the stretch of his bared throat - shallowly, but drawing a line of blood all the same.

A line of blood that Will descends upon at once, licking at the sticky trail and nipping at the wound until Hannibal's flesh is no doubt angrily inflamed and raw. When Will's mouth crashes against his own, Hannibal can taste the coppery tang of the blood that stains Will's lips, drinks the taste of his own life force from Will's insistent tongue.

And Will's tongue *is* insistent, licking into his mouth and then owning every square inch of it. When their lips finally break apartit's all the more apparent how they've been rutting against each other in the meantime, and Will gives a lovely, frustrated snarl as he pulls his body away, grips Hannibal's shirt to pull it away from his body with one hand and then slicing through it with the scalpel effortlessly.

Hannibal is slightly relieved to find that Will dispenses of his trousers with more conventional means, stashing his blade into his own pocket before tearing like some sort of feral beast at the bindings around Hannibal's waist. Hannibal allows his clothing to be stripped away and stands before Will, nude and proud, awaiting his next move.

He gives no reaction when Will fists a hand into his hair, which is likely why the doctor is all the more harsh when he yanks roughly to guide Hannibal away from the wall, pulling him forcibly - as if Hannibal would struggle - into the modest bedroom of the villa that Will has claimed as his own, only barely avoid the shattered glass still littering the floor.

He allows his body to grow lax and fall when he's shoved unceremoniously onto the mattress, shifting only to position himself properly at the center of it as he watches Will tug away at his own clothing. Hannibal is hard and wanting already, his ruddy cock heavy and leaking readily against his stomach. He's pleased to see Will in the same state when he strips away the last of their barriers, intrigued when Will dips down to retrieve the scalpel from the pocket of his pants before he moves to join Hannibal on the bed.

Will climbs atop him, straddling his thighs and dropping down to allow their aching cocks to brush together, all while holding the already bloodied scalpel up for Hannibal's perusal. When Will glances down to him, his smile is wicked and toothy, his eyes glinting with righteous retribution.

"You stripped away my life," he mutters thoughtfully. "Only fair I do the same, yes?"

Pride and satisfaction swell in Hannibal's chest, the yearning he's felt to see Will at his most enabled finally quelled as Will brings his blade down slowly. Hannibal hisses at the sensation

of his flesh being split, even though it irritates him far less than it should. This is for *Will,* after all. And Will wants him to *feel it.*

"Are you going to tally the differences and sums of our battles into my skin? Is that what will satisfy you, Will?" Hannibal pants, struggling against the desire to tilt his hips *up* into the heat of Will's body even as the nerves in his chest sing in pain; flesh slit apart shallowly, just enough to mar, but not enough to damage. With this first strike, Hannibal is reassured of his initial prediction; Will has no intention or desire of *ending* him, his only goal to make Hannibal pay his pound of flesh.

Will doesn't deign to answer him, merely carves another few shallow lines along Hannibal's torso that he ultimately bends down to lap at with his tongue. Before Hannibal can think to command the moment again, Will is sucking two fingers into his mouth and then dropping them between his thighs.

"I'd really prefer not to stop these proceedings to gag you," Will murmurs, voice edging on a sigh as he sinks down onto his slick fingers. His heavy-lidded eyes flutter and then grow sharp, piercing Hannibal with a fierce glare. "So kindly *shut up."*

Hannibal, of course, does nothing of the sort, far too intrigued now that Will is taking his wrath out with his own hands rather than by an ill-suited proxy. "Does it feel as good as you'd hoped, Will? To feel my flesh tear beneath your skilled fingers? To drag your blade against my skin and know that you're leaving your mark?"

Will pulls his fingers from himself with a snarl of frustration, shoving them into Hannibal's mouth without preamble. The hand still clutching his scalpel is white-knuckled but steady, and it makes Hannibal's stomach clench with desire. "You know, the scalpel is a particularly elegant and precise tool, requiring so little pressure to cut," he draws a quick, whisper-soft line down Hannibal's lower abdomen as if to show him. "But with just a little additional force you can scar, you can cut through skin and down to the bone." Will emphasizes this by applying slightly more pressure to the blade, dragging it against Hannibal's chest in a straight, harsh line that pulls a hiss to Hannibal's throat. The pain is bright white and sharp behind his eyes as he squeezes them shut, only for a moment until they fly open again, unwilling to miss even a second of Will's reckoning.

He hums around Will's fingers where they still plug his mouth, massaging his tongue. He lets saliva pool in his mouth and then *sucks,* and Will pulls his fingers free and slaps him for it, hard enough that his head snaps to the side and his cheek stings with the phantom of Will's spit-slick fingers.

Will's fingers find his mouth again and plunge inside once more, all the way to his throat and then further still until he is gagging around them reflexively, even his typical iron-will unable to stop his body from seizing up around the intrusion. "You look so pretty like this, red-rimmed eyes and swollen lips. Maybe I'll keep you just like this always, stuffed full of me and loving every second of it."

Hannibal moans around Will's fingers, and Will removes them and pushes them back inside his own body, flesh parting around them forcefully. Hannibal can see the tense set of Will's

shoulders and the taut line of his body, knows he most likely isn't hitting all the places he likes the most and that the angle and lack of proper lubricant can't be comfortable.

He doesn't speak for several moments, content to watch Will as he rides his own fingers above Hannibal, scissoring them to try and coax his flesh to grow more pliant. "Hold your dick up for me, Hannibal." Will growls, the scalpel not forgotten as he pushes it back to Hannibal's throat this time, demanding and threatening and all the more resplendent for it.

"Of course, darling," Hannibal quips, reaching between them to take himself in hand and hold his cock for Will who kneels forward to angle himself and then leans back against the pressure of Hannibal's cockhead, hissing through gritted teeth as it slips just past his still too tight muscles.

Hannibal can't stop his own eyes from fluttering shut at the sensation, tilting his head back reflexively to open the expanse of his throat to Will's instrument. He will relish every moment that the doctor plays him just so, absorb the sting of every cut, the loss of each drop of blood, just to see his Will shining brightly in his *justice,* righteous retribution that tastes just as sweet as his every cut with the cold steel.

Will doesn't waste any time, settling himself down Hannibal's shaft until he's fully seated, his ass flush to Hannibal's thighs. He grinds himself in slow, lazy circles for a few moments, adjusting to the stretch and fullness of taking Hannibal.

Will lays the scalpel down on Hannibal's chest and sinks his claws into Hannibal's flesh, holding himself up while he starts to ride Hannibal viciously, and Hannibal can't stop the gasp it pulls from his throat to feel Will's body squeezed so tightly around him and moving at such a rapid pace.

Hannibal's stomach clenches with pleasure when Will lets out a decadent moan, dropping his head back and arching his body as he rocks down onto Hannibal's cock. Hannibal can't help but reach out to him, grasping his hips encouragingly as he murmurs his praise. "That's right, sweet boy. Take your pleasure."

Will tilts his head down at that, opens his eyes to slits and pins Hannibal with an unamused glare, his hands quickly darting to remove Hannibal's own from his body and pin them at his sides.

"Shh, shh," Will quiets him, stern but breathless as he continues to ride Hannibal's cock, dropping low after a moment to hold his lips tantalizingly close to Hannibal's own. Hannibal doesn't dare attempt to close the distance between them, can only allow his body to fall lax to his lover's will as he breathes, hot and low against Hannibal's mouth, "Toys don't talk."

It's enough of a directive for Hannibal to seal his own lips, swallow away each burst of praise and encouragement that longs to fall from his lips. Will is the most beautiful he's ever been, resplendent in his confidence and cruelty, greedily taking that which he desires and giving back nothing to Hannibal - or so Will assumes.

In reality, Will is gifting him with the greatest gift of all - the sight that has yet been unseen to any, reluctant even to *Will's* own perusal, he imagines. His lover is fierce and fair in kind,

allowing Hannibal the pleasure of allowing Will to seek his own, though Hannibal has a feeling the same will not be permitted to him.

A suspicion that is confirmed sooner rather than later, as Will quickens the pace of his hips, the fingers of one hand digging into Hannibal's shoulder even as the other snatches the scalpel back up and carelessly drags it in a jagged line down the length of Hannibal's torso. His eyes squeeze shut, breath growing to ragged pants as Will begins to clench around Hannibal's cock, and the pitchy but insistent command falls from his lips in an almost whine - *"Don't come."*

And then Will slams himself down onto Hannibal a final time, hand abandoning the scalpel once more to angle his cock so that his release spills all across Hannibal's aching chest and raw, open wounds. He leans forward so that their chests nearly brush and grins mercilessly down at Hannibal, bringing his now free hand up to rub slow, painful circles into Hannibal's bleeding flesh, mixing his semen with Hannibal's wounds.

Once he has sufficiently coated Hannibal's chest with his come and Hannibal's own blood, he brings his messy fingers to Hannibal's mouth and shoves them past his lips with no preamble, all the way back to Hannibal's throat so he nearly gags again. He massages Hannibal's tongue and smears the tacky fluids across the muscle and behind his teeth, coating him in their combined scent.

Will finally removes his fingers, tapping contemplatively on Hannibal's chest. Hannibal's body is drawn tight, only his iron willpower keeping him from tumbling over the dangerous precipice of his own orgasm. The relative, tentative peace they have managed through Will's show of ownership is hard won, and Hannibal doesn't wish to do anything to potentially upset the balance they've reached.

"I take it I'm still not to find my own release, then?" Hannibal taunts, eyes growing heavy as though he's the one who's been drugged. Perhaps he has, he considers, Will possibly friendlier with the bartender at his little dive bar than Hannibal could have realized.

"Oh no, not for a while I should think. You have a *lot* to make up for, Hannibal. I'd hate to distract you from making it up to me by allowing you to find pleasure in it." Will practically purrs, closing the remaining distance between their bodies and crushing himself to Hannibal's chest.

"Perish the thought, darling," Hannibal risks moving his hand to bring it to Will's hip, petting softly against his heated, sweaty flesh.

Will sighs and the sound is almost content, his form melting heavily over Hannibal's body. He lays that way for nearly a minute, face buried in the crook of Hannibal's neck before finally pulling back. His tongue darts out to slip over the line that bisects Hannibal's throat, hot and wet and making his cock throb with the need for release where it's still buried deep in his lover. Finally, Will pulls off of him, rolling to the side to splay out on his back with another soft sigh.

"I'm hungry," he announces, rousing Hannibal's heavy lids with a stern poke to his side. "Go make me something."

“Of course, dear,” Hannibal agrees, moving into action immediately. Secretly, he’s thrilled that Will will still allow him to provide for him in this way, even if it’s sought under the guise of a command.

He doesn’t dare move to clean himself up, resigns himself with the fact that Will wants his come and Hannibal’s blood drying tacky against his skin while he performs this service. He has a feeling Will is going to see to him as soon as his appetite is sated, the doctor within him too strong a pull not to clean and dress Hannibal’s wounds.

In the meantime, Hannibal pulls on his trousers and shirt, not bothering to button it up, and makes his way to the kitchen. He recalls seeing some artisanal meats and cheeses in Will’s fridge the last time he had a peek, and is already forming the plan for a charcuterie board in his mind.

“Hannibal.”

He halts in the doorway when Will calls to him, helpless but to turn toward the man seeking him. “Yes, Will?”

“Your being here...if it’s not official business I can only imagine you’ve finally taken a vacation?”

Hannibal nods. “That’s right. Long overdue, if one were to look at my attendance records.”

Will nods as well, a contemplative expression on his face that ripples and turns hard and expectant before Hannibal’s very eyes. “You’re going to need to call or draft an email to hand in your resignation. And make whatever other arrangements need to be made for your properties and accounts in America. You’re not leaving Cuba.”

Hannibal meets Will’s gaze, steels himself to shutter away the immense pleasure that swells through him at Will’s command. Because Will wants him *here.* Doesn’t want him to leave. And that’s one step closer to having earned his fickle lover’s forgiveness.

He bows his head in assent, eyes cast low so that Will might not see the mirthful delight that brightens them. “As you say, my love.”

End Notes

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'Til next time! 💚 💜 BellaRai

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